

CASE STUDY

Achieving Robust Security in a Vulnerable Landscape: How Viettel Safeguards Its Network and Customers with Fortinet

Established in 1989 as a military infrastructure company, Viettel has since evolved into a leading telecom and technology conglomerate in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, with operations in more than 10 countries and annual revenue exceeding \$11 billion. Beyond telecom, the company is committed to positively impacting its markets and has recently achieved third place in Fortune's "Change the World 2024" rankings.

"With a workforce of 50,000 employees servicing 110 million customers across vast geographical regions, maintaining high standards of data privacy and security is essential for sustaining customer confidence and loyalty," says Nguyen Thanh Tuan, ISP engineer, IP, Fixed Broadband and Television department at Viettel. "However, the rapid rise in cyberattacks, especially targeting telecom and ISP sectors, poses significant risks to our operations and customer trust. Thus, Viettel faces the dual challenge of operating securely in an increasingly vulnerable landscape while meeting the growing needs of our tech-savvy customers."

As demand for high-quality service grows, Viettel needed to accelerate the deployment of a robust security strategy so hundreds of millions of its customers could continue enjoying high-quality, uninterrupted services securely. At the same time, the company needed to ensure that its infrastructure could scale effectively, maintaining performance and reliability through safe and secure technology tools.

Tuan emphasizes: "As we navigate our digital journey, protecting our network is among our top priorities. We must ensure the utmost safety of our systems, protect customer data at every interaction, and quickly respond to cyberthreats. This commitment enables us to deliver exceptional telecom services to our customers and drive positive business results."

Elevating Digital Defense for Vietnam's Premier Tech Innovator

As Vietnam's leading tech innovator, Viettel has embarked on a proactive digital security journey, implementing a comprehensive suite of security solutions. Over the years, Viettel has prioritized adopting security products specifically designed to address diverse cybersecurity threats and challenges, all while following a meticulously planned security roadmap.

Despite robust security measures, Viettel decided to evaluate additional security solutions to better meet the rapidly changing cybersecurity landscape, characterized by evolving cyberthreats, a significant rise in cyber incidents, and increased regulatory pressures. "Faced with a 50% surge in data breaches and a fourfold rise in phishing sites, we saw an urgent need to bolster our security measures," comments Nguyen Tuan Dzung, IP engineer, IP, Fixed Broadband and Television department. "As services expand into cloud computing, seamless integration and scalability are crucial for maintaining performance and compliance with cybersecurity regulations. Naturally, this led us to consider Fortinet."

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"With Fortinet, we reduced the number of incidents by approximately 50%, significantly enhancing the management of our internal network segments. This substantial decrease in security incidents resulted in estimated savings of 30% in incident response costs, including lower labor costs for remediation and reduced downtime expenses related to security breaches."

Nguyen Thanh Tuan,
ISP Engineer, IP, Fixed
Broadband and Television
Department, Viettel Group

Details

Customer: Viettel Group

Industry: Technology

Location: Hanoi, Vietnam

Viettel was looking for a state-of-the-art solution that would allow it to respond to these pressing challenges promptly and effectively. It evaluated a wide range of enterprise security solutions before selecting Fortinet. “Based on our problems, we realized that Fortinet offered comprehensive security-fabric and advanced threat protection features that would meet our needs. And that’s why we decided to go ahead with Fortinet,” comments Dzung.

Viettel deployed several flagship Fortinet products, including FortiGate 1800F, 2200E, 600F, and 2600F, to enhance cybersecurity across IT, data communications network, and fixed broadband networks. “Security is our primary concern; thus, it’s crucial that our partner shares this view and can offer robust security solutions,” explains Dzung. “With Fortinet, we can configure each FortiGate device for specific traffic loads and set multi-layered security policies tailored to each network segment’s unique requirements. This gives us flexibility while ensuring robust security,” he adds.

Enhancing Protection for a Broadening Satellite Team

As Vietnam’s leading ICT corporation, Viettel employs over 50,000 dynamic employees across more than 100 sites in Vietnam and abroad, including regional offices, data centers, and operational hubs. This massive workforce means the IT team must ensure robust network security amid growing cybersecurity concerns. “One of our top IT challenges is to enable secure, anytime, anywhere connectivity for a large number of on-the-go users while preventing malicious codes from infiltrating our systems and exposing sensitive data,” explains Dzung.

The Fortinet-powered security infrastructure successfully achieved this challenging mission, supporting remote employees effectively while ensuring consistent security policies across all locations. Thousands of Viettel’s internal users benefit daily from this new system, with remote team members gaining secure access to corporate resources. “With Fortinet, our company can support a growing satellite workforce, ensuring safe operations from various locations while maintaining culture, flexibility, and operational efficiency,” adds Dzung.

Streamlined Security for Simplified Management

Having adopted a mix of security tools from leading providers, Viettel needed to seamlessly integrate Fortinet solutions with its existing systems to achieve total network security. With training from Fortinet’s Vietnam solutions engineering team, extensive documentation, and user guides, Viettel’s security team soon managed and optimized the security solutions, ensuring seamless and secure network operations across the organization.

Moreover, reporting became a lot easier with FortiManager and FortiAnalyzer. “Thanks to FortiManager centralized management, Viettel was able to deploy security policies, firmware updates, and configurations from a single interface, which simplified device management,” says Tuan. “Moreover, the FortiManager feature’s enables them to ensure consistent security policies across the network, maintaining the same security standards for all devices,” he adds.

Tuan highlights how FortiAnalyzer enables his team to transform data into actionable insights. “FortiAnalyzer log management and analysis capabilities provide real-time insights into network activity, helping us identify potential threats swiftly. Its comprehensive reporting, with over 300 customizable options, is crucial for monitoring compliance and auditing purposes. Advanced event correlation enables us to quickly respond to detected threats by analyzing log patterns,” says Tuan.

Business Impact

- Secured 24×7 connectivity for up to 50,000 users and 110 million external customers
- Simple administration and ease of use
- 50% reduction in the number of incidents and 30% savings in incident response costs
- Maximum protection against cyberattacks

Solutions

- FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall
- FortiManager
- FortiAnalyzer

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Nguyen Thanh Tuan,
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The Best of Both Worlds: Performance and Cost-Efficiency

During the evaluation process, the Viettel IT team explored various proposals from different market-leading vendors. However, Fortinet emerged as the preferred choice as it was one of the few vendors offering a high-performing, end-to-end solution package at an attractive price.

“Adopting Fortinet’s centralized management tools, FortiManager and FortiAnalyzer, has streamlined our network operations, saving us hours in administrative tasks every month while improving resource allocation,” says Tuan. “Operational involvement is minimal, with most tasks handled automatically, which leads to a 20% increase in positive feedback from internal users. In addition, Fortinet’s comprehensive reporting and scalable solutions ensure compliance and future savings, which is crucial as we continue to eye ambitious growth targets.”

A simplified IT operation isn’t the only focus for the Viettel team. Due to the company’s massive scale, it has become a prime target for cyberattacks, facing 500,000 DDoS attacks and numerous ransomware attempts this year alone—a 16% increase from the same period in 2023. Therefore, maintaining robust network security in such a demanding environment is critical.

“The choice was clear and straightforward,” explains Tuan. “With Fortinet, we reduced the number of incidents by approximately 50%, significantly enhancing the management of our internal network segments. This substantial decrease in security incidents resulted in estimated savings of around 30% in incident response costs, including lower labor costs for remediation and reduced downtime expenses related to security breaches.”

Dzung wholeheartedly agrees with his colleague. “In Fortinet, we’ve found a partner whose solutions deliver unmatched quality and value, ensuring our network’s security,” he concludes.

Empowering Vietnam’s Digital Innovators

The Viettel team looks forward to partnering further with Fortinet to enhance secure connection capabilities for Viettel’s users and customers. “The success of our implementation has demonstrated the reliability of Fortinet solutions. We plan to expand the deployment of its solutions to improve network reliability, operational efficiency, and user satisfaction. Our ultimate goal is to optimize and simplify our security environment, providing more value-added services to Viettel’s management,” says Dzung.

The same sentiment was echoed by Dzung’s colleague Tuan. “We believe secure connectivity empowers users to achieve their goals and enhance Viettel’s pioneering role in digital innovation in Vietnam,” Tuan affirms.



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